

NewsRelease

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

NASA TO SHARE EXPLORATION VISION WITH STUDENTS

Former astronaut and current Director of NASA's Langley Research Center Roy D. Bridges, Jr. will visit Martinsville Middle School at 1:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 5, to share the agency's vision for space exploration with the next generation of explorers. Bridges will be accompanied by astronaut Leland Melvin.

"I've had the good fortune to experience exploration first-hand - as an Air Force test pilot and NASA astronaut," said Bridges. "I want to share with today's students both the excitement of discovery and how they can prepare to play a role in our nation's future in space."

Bridges will talk with Martinsville students about America's heritage as explorers and outline NASA's stepping-stone approach to exploring Earth, returning to the Moon, then moving on to Mars and beyond.

"We won't know what lies on these distant shores until we see, touch and learn by doing - first with robots and eventually as humans, said Bridges."

Media interested in arranging interviews with Bridges and Melvin should contact Kimberly W. Land at 757-864-9885 or 757-344-8611 (mobile) by close of business Thursday, Nov. 4, or by calling Marny Skora at 757-344-6111, who will be present at the event.

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Melvin joined the astronaut corps in 1998. After extensive astronaut training, he was assigned to the Astronaut Office Space Station Operations Branch and the Education Department at NASA Headquarters, Washington, D.C. He co-managed NASA's Educator Astronaut Program and traveled across the country, engaging thousands of students and teachers in the excitement of space exploration, and inspiring them to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. He is currently assigned to the Robotics Branch and will serve in technical assignments until assigned to a space flight.

Martinsville Middle School is an Explorer School and is participating in a three-year partnership with NASA. Stimulating student imaginations and creativity via NASA discoveries, the partnership seeks to inspire young people and help them pursue careers in science, technology and engineering.

For information about the NASA Explorer Schools Program on the Internet, visit:

<http://explorerschools.nasa.gov>

For more information about NASA's new vision for space exploration, visit:

http://www.nasa.gov/missions/solarsystem/explore_main.html

For more information about NASA, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov>